Address by the Al-Fateh Delegation to the Second International Conference in Support of the Arab Peoples

Cairo, January 1969

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Friends,

We are very happy to have the opportunity to meet with you, because you represent people who fought for peace based on justice.

We can see among you people who fought the Nazi invasion and the fascist terror in Europe.

We also find among you people who fought, and are still fighting, imperialism and colonialism and racial discrimination in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

We honestly feel that we stand among friends and comrades who believe in the right of every people to self-determination and its right to enjoy liberty on its own land, free of oppression and discrimination.

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Our people were deprived of their rights to self-determination and to the enjoyment of life on their own land without oppression. This was the result of a serious racist aggression carried out by an imperialist organisation: Zionism.

The aggression of the 5th of June is one manifestation of this basic aggression that had its roots in the 19th century, and whose culmination was the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The major victim of this aggression was the Arab Palestinian people who were forced to evacuate their homes and land under a reign of terror and oppression.

We therefore refuse to consider the 1967 aggression as a

separate and distinct phenomenon, and we refuse to accept any solution focussed on the results of the last aggression without considering the source of the aggression itself.

The Resolution of the Security Council, November 22nd 1967, and all further proposals explaining or modifying it, are inadequate and irrelevant from our point of view, and therefore are totally and categorically unacceptable to us.

All such proposals skirt the real issue and avoid its core, namely: the right of the Palestinians to liberate their country, to enjoy its land and homes, and to have the right to decide how they want to run it.

We, the people of Palestine, are carrying on an armed revolution in order to re-establish peace with justice in the Holy Land.

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We would like you to consider the magnitude of our problem. For we are facing a Zionist structure that had its roots in 19th century Europe, at the heart of the imperialist movement. Zionism is one of the most oppressive and aggressive forms of imperialism, one that has as its major goal the total uprooting of one people from a country to replace them by another.

The roots of the aggression lie in the Zionist ideology itself, with its belief in the need to bring a select, chosen people without a land, to a land that is to be evacuated by its inferior people.

The methods used to accomplish this objective are terror, oppression and deceit.

Let me quote one of the original Jewish pioneers in Palestine, Nathan Chofshi, who wrote to the editor of the *Jewish Newsletter* in February 1959:

"If you really wanted to know what happened, we old Jewish settlers in Palestine who witnessed the fight could tell you how and in what manner we Jews forced the Arabs to leave cities and villages...Some of them were driven out by force of arms; others were made to leave by deceit, lying and false promises. It is enough to cite the cities of Jaffa, Lydda, Ramleh, Beer Sheba, and Acre from among numberless others." Nathan Chofshi continued, "Here we have people who lived on its own land for 1,300 years. We came and turned the native Arabs into tragic refugees. And still we dare to slander and malign them, to besmirch their

name. Instead of being deeply ashamed of what we did and of trying to undo some of the evil we committed, by helping those unfortunate refugees, we justify our terrible acts and even attempt to glorify them."

Professor Erich Fromm, the noted Jewish writer and thinker, had this to add: "It is often said that the Arabs fled, that they left the country voluntarily, and that they therefore bear the responsibility for losing their property and their land. But, in general international law, the principle holds true that no citizen loses his property or his rights of citizenship, and the citizenship right is a de facto right to which the Arabs in Palestine have much more legitimacy than the Jews. Just because the Arabs fled? " Professor Fromm asks. "Since when is that punishable by confiscation of property and by being barred from returning to the land on which a people's forefathers have lived for generations? The claim of the Jews to the land of Israel cannot be a realistic political claim. If all nations would suddenly claim territories in which their forefathers have lived two thousand years ago this world would be a madhouse."

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The Zionists went ahead coldbloodedly with their sinister scheme to vacate Palestine of its people, by the use of terror, massacres and frightening rumors.

Arthur Koestler, the pro-Zionist author, described what happened at Deir Yassin on April 9th, 1948, as the "blood bath that was the psychologically decisive factor in the Arabs' spectacular exodus."

On that day, the Zionist terrorist organization Irgun Zvei Leumi killed 250 men, women and children. After 1948 there were other mass killings in occuped Palestine, e.g. Ikrit (1951), Al Tira (1953), Abu Ghosh (1953), Kafr Kassem (1956), etc., as part of the systematic Zionist plan for the complete evacuation of the Palestinians, to be replaced by Jewish settlers from all over the world.

These were the conditions that forced the Palestinians to leave their homeland.

The Zionists did not come to a country without people. There lived in Palestine a people with a civilization. They reacted to the

Zionist challenge by education, economic and human mobilization, and competed with the Zionists in the fields of management, finance and technology.

With all their efforts, by 1947 the Zionists had only been able to acquire 5.6% of the total area of Palestine. However, the 1947 U.N. resolution for partition allowed them 56% of Palestine, and by terror and aggression they went on to occupy 80% in 1948. Today, after the June 5 1967 aggression, the rest of our Palestine is occupied, as well as Sinai and the Golan Heights.

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For twenty years, the Palestinians were the victims of world procrastination. While many resolutions were passed in the United Nations, the Israelis continued to occupy more and more territory while the world remained indifferent. Under such conditions, the only alternative left to the Palestinians was armed revolution.

I am sure that the facts of the case are very clear to you. You can visualize the conditions under which our people have suffered. For twenty years most of the Palestinians have lived in a diaspora of shabby tents, misery and the humiliation of a meager dole. In this schizophrenic world of ours the rights of Africans, Asians and Polynesians were recognized and espoused, while Palestinian rights were disregarded and forgotten. Not even the tragedy of the heroic Angolans, South Africans and Zimbabwans equalled theirs. For, alone among these oppressed people, the Palestinians were totally uprooted from their land and completely denied the right to live on it and enjoy its fruits.

Our people have risen to arms because all other means have been exhausted. We refuse to accept misery and diaspora as our fate, and we refuse charity and compromise as solutions to our problem. We shall overcome: through a long-term liberation revolution to destroy the bases of colonialist aggression that frustrate the exercise of our inalienable rights, and to bring an end to the racist militarist regime that oppresses our people. We will fight so that peace with justice is restored to our land.

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Our revolution started its first operations at the beginning of 1965, two and a half years before the June 5 war. With old

rusty weapons and against heavy odds, our youth embarked on the revolution with all the determination and persistence of a long-oppressed people. Now as we embark on our fifth year of struggle, the fruits of our sacrifices are beginning to show. The Palestine Liberation Movement has succeeded in awakening our people, in rekindling its hope for a better future with dignity and respect in our own land. We are forcing the enemies of peace to admit their failure to extinguish our revolution, we are winning battles, and we are starting to shape our destiny. We are not swayed by emotional appeals, we are not seekers of revenge, we are not bloodthirsty terrorists. We are freedom fighters with clear and mature goals. We are fighting today to create the new Palestine of tomorrow: A progressive, democratic, secular Palestine in which Christian, Moslem and Jew will worship, work, live peacefully and enjoy equal rights. This is no utopian dream or false promise, for we have always lived in peace, Moslems, Christians and Jews in the Holy Land. The Palestinian Arabs gave a refuge, a warm shelter and a helping hand to Jews fleeing persecution in Christian Europe and to the Armenians fleeing persecution in Moslem Turkey, as well as to Greeks, Circassians and Maltese among others.

Our Palestinian revolution still stretches its welcoming hand to all human beings who want to fight for, and live in, a democratic, tolerant Palestine, irrespective of race, color or religion.

During the last four years, some 500 of our people have given their lives on the battlefield. During the same period many more than that have died in refugee camps from bitter cold, poor nourishment and disease.

We are here to assert to you, and to ask you to confirm to your people, that our people will not lay down their arms until Palestine is liberated and our rights restored. We will not accept any settlement that denies us these rights, be it the Security Council's resolution, or any other proposal or political settlement ensuing from it. We will not accept any substitute to a war of national liberation and will tenaciously hold to it regardless of sacrifices and costs. Could anybody have asked you to accept anything less than total freedom from Nazism, fascism or colonialism? We are confident the people of the world will back our struggle and will support our revolution, for it is the struggle of man to achieve the loftiest of man's values: peace and justice.

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